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APRIL 18, 1950
608TH BROADCAST

Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

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S. Pat. 656

What Effect Do Our Race Relations Have on Our Foreign Policy?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, Jr.

Speakers

HARLES S. JOHNSON

BROOKS HAYS

(See also page 12)

COMING

April 25, 1950

**How Can We Best Insure Loyalty of
United States Citizens?**

May 2, 1950

**How Should Business and Government
Deal With Unemployment?**

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"How Can We Best Insure Loyalty of United States Citizens?"



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"How Should Business and Government Deal With Unemployment?"



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GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



APRIL 18, 1950

VOL. 15, No. 51

What Effect Do Our Race Relations Have on Our Foreign Policy?

Announcer:

To welcome Town Meeting to Pittsburgh, here is the Mayor of the city, the Honorable David Lawrence.

Mayor Lawrence:

The city of Pittsburgh is happy to welcome America's Town Meeting of the Air. Our host this evening is the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the largest Negro newspaper in this country, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. It was founded in 1910 by a group of forward-looking American Negroes who wanted to supplement the existing news agencies, to keep their people well informed, and to crusade for the rights of the Negro and other minority groups.

The progress we have made in this country in race relations during the past 40 years is substantial evidence of the success of this paper and others working in the same cause. Great credit during most of this period must go to the late Robert Lee Vann, its publisher and a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh.

Now to preside over our discussion here is your moderator, the president of Town Hall, and founder of America's Town Meeting, George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (*Applause*)

Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. We are happy to be the guests of the *Pittsburgh Courier* tonight on the celebration of its 40th anniversary, and your moderator is pleased to discover that its publisher for so many years, the late Robert Lee

Vann who achieved great success in this city, was a native of my home state of North Carolina, and we share the same birthday.

The last time we discussed this question we were in New Delhi, India, and our subject was, "What Are Democracy's Best Answers to Communism?" A Pittsburgh girl, Mrs. Edith Sampson, and a southern banker, Mr. Linn Hemingway, were the two American participants. Tonight Dr. Charles S. Johnson, president of Fisk University, and a leading Negro educator, a native of Virginia and graduate of Virginia Union University and the University of Chicago, will share the platform with Congressman Brooks Hays, Democrat of Arkansas, who is so well known for his continuing fight for clean and honest elections that one Arkansas farmer refused to cast his vote in an election declaring, "It ain't legal, Brooks Hays' name is missing!"

No one will deny that at this moment of history American foreign policy is of paramount concern to our own country and to the rest of the world. The eyes of the free people of the world have turned upon us with increased concentration, so we have invited these two distinguished Americans, and this fine representative audience here in Pittsburgh to help us hold up a mirror in front of ourselves so that we may see what other people may see of our race relations and its possible effect on our foreign policy.

We'll hear first from Dr. Charles S. Johnson, president of Fisk University of Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Johnson. (*Applause*)

Dr. Johnson:

It is my sincere conviction that our racial system in America is the Achilles' heel of both our domestic and foreign policy. We fought and won the last war to end the threat of the arbitrary brutalities of a master race. This was not all, but it was important.

Let us look at our position. At the University of Texas last month a student referendum on the admission of Negro students was called off two days before the poll. It was argued successfully that a vote to keep the ban would give the Russians another chance to howl at the United States; a vote to lift the ban would cause the Texans to howl.

Last December I visited India, a country of 400,000,000 people of newly acquired national independence. The most frequent question asked about America in the eager, urgent

canning of the possibilities of a friendly alliance was, "What about the American Negro minority?"

Assistant Secretary of State George C. McGee, returning from a tour of the Near East, South Asia, and Africa, listed high among the barriers to our coöperation with these countries reports of racial discriminations in the United States.

There are few countries in Europe and none in Asia or in South America and the Caribbean that are not concerned observers of this aspect of our domestic policy.

A Danish visitor on a mission for the King said this, "You should know that Washington is not a good salesman for your kind of democracy." Washington, D. C., the capital of the Nation and the capital of world democracy, is the only great capital in the world except perhaps Johannesburg, South Africa, where foreign visitors have to be chaperoned to protect them from insults on account of color. The hotels, restaurants, and theaters have been closed to all persons of discernible color. The foreign visitor cannot escape observing that schools and many other public services are racially segregated.

There's no escaping the overtness and intent of this practice, for this city is governed by a committee of Congress. In the minds of delegates from "colored" countries, these observations speak louder than our statesmen when they speak quite earnestly about our devotion to democratic principles. We are signatories to the United Nations Charter, pledging ourselves to "promote respect for and the observance of human rights, and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race." Civil rights, about which they are scoffing in some areas of our Nation, are simply the domestic counterpart of human rights, accepted now as the moral standard for a civilized world.

Of the 59 nations that are members of the United Nations, well over 40 have a majority of colored people, or a colored minority so substantial as to make their presence an important factor in the foreign as well as domestic policies of the country. Over 20 of these nations are represented in the United Nations by delegates who are colored by United States standards, and who, everywhere in this country, run the risk of receiving the discriminatory treatment which, in varying degrees, is meted out to our own colored citizens. This risk is not a hypothetical one.

Our allies in the last war were not blind to our peculiar

practices regarding race. They saw our colored troops getting the dirty work, inferior and segregated facilities.

We might ask ourselves, "How can we convincingly teach democracy to Japan and Germany unless we take it seriously at home?" Consider the handicap under which our own diplomatic representatives must work in negotiating with other nations, friendly and unfriendly, when this specter of race is introduced.

We are before the bar of world opinion as the chief advocates of the right of individuals to live as free men, equal before the law. Unless we can solve our own racial problem we cannot hope to plead successfully the cause of freedom and equality for others. (Applause)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Dr. Johnson. Across the Mississippi, in the State of Arkansas, Congressman Brooks Hays has lived and worked for the past half century, and he always has had an active part in interracial organizations. Congressman Hays, may we have your views on tonight's question. Congressman Brooks Hays. (Applause)

Congressman Hays:

I agree with many of the points made by my good friend Dr. Johnson. Our differences are primarily a matter of emphasis. I would highlight the tremendous progress already made. He insists that the imperfections be emphasized.

The cancellation of the Texas poll is overshadowed in my picture of the Southwest by the recent admission of Negro students to the University of Arkansas Colleges of Law and Medicine.

The low salaries for Negro teachers in parts of the country are not pleasing, but who is not impressed by the figures for North Carolina showing that under the state's formula for determining teachers salaries according to college degrees the colored teachers average slightly more than the white.

Everywhere there is evidence that the cities and states are sincerely attempting to equalize opportunities and services. My own city, Little Rock, Arkansas, has just authorized a bond issue of \$360,000 for improving playgrounds for Negro children.

The careers of such men as Dr. Ralph Bunche should certainly weigh as much in the appraisal of progress as the disconcerting things so often called to our attention.

It is not an idle boast that nowhere in the world has any

minority group experienced the advances which have been registered by the Negro people of the United States within the past 50 years. Contrasted with many situations in the Old World, it should be convincing evidence that we do believe in social justice and equality of opportunity.

This progress should be in the background of every discussion of race relations and foreign policy.

The second factor as indicated by Dr. Johnson is that there is an awakened interest on the part of other nations in America's handling of the problems of interracial harmony. That the people of Asia, where one-half the world's population resides, are particularly concerned with this problem was recently impressed upon me by a visit to my office of a group from that area. They were college students, and they came to ask questions about the Congress. Their chief interest was civil rights.

The old order is passing, and the only question remaining is whether changes in that part of the world are to be in line with our ideals of freedom, or whether antidemocratic elements will take over.

We have not taken seriously enough the matter of acquainting the restless peoples of the East with American concepts and goals. In spite of our good record in the Philippines and elsewhere, American prestige sometimes suffers because identified with colonial domination.

The Communists are out to exploit this situation, just as the Japanese did in trying to take the Orient by arousing prejudice against the West. For this reason we must maintain an expanded program for publicizing America's activities for interracial good will.

Something more than strategy is involved. After all, the best motive for seeking social justice is not to be thought well of by other nations, worthy though that is. Members of a family have a stronger appeal for considerate treatment of each other than that the neighbors will think ill of them if there are quarrels in the household.

Moreover, specific proposals designed to improve race situations must be viewed in the light of constitutional principles. Under the American system, many decisions must be made by the states and the localities, not by the Federal Government, which determines foreign policy. I'm sure that this was the thought of the Negro leaders who framed the Durham Conference Statement of 1942, to the effect that progress must be within the framework of our democracy.

Our racial minorities have demonstrated a tremendous capacity for adjustment to difficult situations. Generally, they have advanced their complaints with due concessions to the factors I have mentioned, and the further fact that prejudice and discrimination must have something more than legislative treatment.

But we of the West are challenged—challenged as never before in our history—and if we are to be distinguished by the love of justice and devotion to human brotherhood, we must continue, yes, we must double our exertions. (*Applause*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Congressman Hays. Now, gentlemen, would you like to exchange questions with each other before we take the questions from our audience? Perhaps we could start with Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson: I'd like to observe that I was not stressing the imperfections; I was simply holding up a mirror to the opinions and comments of other nations of the world.

But since we are referring to the progress that has been made in this field, I'd like to ask Congressman Hays if he doesn't feel that we are, for the past 5 years, in a new accelerated phase of history, and that we cannot sustain our good reputation in the leisurely manner in which we have worked with this question of race relations.

Congressman Hays: Yes, I think I would like to agree with that in general. It's partly due to the fact, of course, that there are tensions in our world, and with the emphasis I have given the situation in the Far East, I would have to say that the solutions cannot wait.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Congressman Hays. Now have you a comment or question for Dr. Johnson before we go on with the audience?

Congressman Hays: Yes, I'd like to ask Dr. Johnson to elaborate on his reference to the United Nations. He said that we have entered into this treaty, or this compact, to recognize and exalt civil rights, with which I agree, but would you not agree, Dr. Johnson, that that simply reaffirms the compact under the Constitution and that the responsibility to preserve human rights and expand them is as heavily upon us as if we had not entered into the United Nations?

I say that for the reason that it seems to me that the em-

phasis should be upon our constitutional mandate and not upon this treaty.

Dr. Johnson: The question almost answers itself. We have been under that obligation for a great many years. I certainly hope that it won't take the United Nations as long to achieve its ideal as it has taken us. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, gentlemen. Now while we get ready for our question period, here's a message of interest to our Town Meeting listeners.

Announcer: Did you know that you may obtain a copy of this important Town Meeting, and the next ten Town Meetings, by subscribing to our weekly Bulletin? The Bulletin contains the complete text, including questions and answers, and biographical sketches of the speakers. Although we know that many of you listen every week, it is possible that other outside activities will prevent you from hearing every Town Meeting in the weeks to come.

Why not subscribe to the Bulletin now, in order to read any discussion you may miss? Just send \$1 for an eleven week subscription to Town Hall, New York 18, N. Y. A year's subscription to the Bulletin is \$4.50. Single copies are ten cents.

It's not too early to remind you that your Town Meeting celebrates its 15th anniversary on May 30th of this year with a program originating in Boston, in coöperation with the annual meeting of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Our subject will be, "What Progress May We Expect During the Next Half Century?"

Now for our question period we return you to Mr. Denny.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Denny: Thank you. We'll start with the lady here in the third row.

Lady: Mr. Chairman, my question is to Congressman Hays. Is there any consistent effort being made by Congress and the population of Washington, D. C., to change racial practices in the Nation's capital?

Congressman Hays: Yes, I think that Congress has given considerable attention to the problem. I wish that we had made better progress, but we are handicapped to some extent by the fact that Congress is very busy on international and national policy questions. For that reason, incidentally, I favor some form of home rule. I think conditions would be improved if we left it to the people of Washington themselves to make some of these decisions.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Congressman Hays. Next question over under the balcony.

Man: In your opinion, Dr. Johnson, has the racial problem been solved in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Denny: Has the racial problem been solved in the Soviet Union? Who knows? (*Laughter*)

Dr. Johnson: Well, they're behind the Curtain, and I can't see back there any better than anybody else. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. I'd like to point out for the questioner that the question tonight is *our* race relations, not the Soviet Union's. We tried to get in there on this world tour, but they ignored our approaches. All right.

Man: Congressman Hays, in a country like ours, with different races aren't our foreign relations of a necessity the result of our race relations?

Congressman Hays: Would you repeat that?

Man: In a country like ours, with different races, isn't it of a necessity that the effectiveness of our foreign relations is a result of the success of our race relations?

Congressman Hays: Yes, I think I agree fully with the implications. I think that we will be more effective in our foreign policy efforts as we work out some of our race problems at home. I think, of course, that requires exertions on the part of both races, and there is a wholesome evidence throughout the country that these exertions are being made.

If I understand the question, I fully agree that it is, in reality, just one problem. I think that's the tenor of the question, and I agree with the conclusion.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Next question.

Man: Dr. Johnson, I would like to ask if you would care to be more specific as to what can we do to stop, or to prevent, the discriminatory practices in the Armed Forces abroad.

Mr. Denny: Dr. Johnson?

Dr. Johnson: The Armed Forces of the United States are under the control of the United States Government. I think it can be said that some changes are being made in that respect, but, until they have been made complete, I think we will not be completely believed.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman in this aisle here. All right.

Man: Does the existence of unsolved racial problems in the world constitute a serious handicap to the development of world federal government? My question is addressed to Representative Hays.

Congressman Hays: That's a big question. Of course, the short answer is yes, it does handicap us in the development of a federal government. Of course, people differ about the kind of world federalism that is desired, but even the minimum type of world organization that most of us would favor requires a high degree of coöperation. The coöperative spirit, which I think we are now developing in America very effectively, will aid greatly in achieving that type of organization on a world level that will prevent aggression and make this a peaceful world.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Next question.

Lady: My question is to Dr. Johnson, please. Dr. Johnson, do you feel that the brotherhood of religion is causing a trend for all people to be more tolerant toward each other, and that we will have a better understanding of each race's problems?

Mr. Denny: I think the tenor of the question was, is religion helping to bring about better understanding of race relations. Is that the idea?

Dr. Johnson: It is making some contribution, undoubtedly, but I would like to divorce religion from the churches that haven't been quite as complete in their judgment, in their progress, even as some of the labor organizations. (Applause)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Dr. Johnson. Congressman Hays has a comment on this.

Congressman Hays: I think one might share the disappointment that Dr. Johnson has expressed with the policies of the churches—their failure to live up to their ideals at all times—and yet perhaps he would agree with me that in our region—

where the largest number of our important racial minority, the Negroes, live—the church is very important. It is beginning to feel its need of leadership in this respect.

I look hopefully to the churches for a better leadership and for the solution to some of these problems. The spiritual element is essential, to my thinking, in the solution of this problem. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The lady here.

Lady: Don't the people of all races in America have more freedom and better living conditions than in any other country?

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

BROOKS HAYS—A Democrat from Arkansas, Mr. Hays has been a member of Congress since 1943. With an A.B. from the University of Arkansas and an LL.B. from George Washington University, he was admitted to the Arkansas bar in 1922. He engaged in the practice of law in his home town of Russellville until 1925, when he was made assistant attorney general of the state. From 1928 to 1933, he was a member of the law firm of Hays and Turner of Little Rock.

In 1934, Mr. Hays was appointed labor compliance officer for Arkansas under the NRA. Later, he was made assistant director of rural rehabilitation in the Farm Security Administration. He resigned this position in 1942 to become a candidate for Congress.

For seven years, Congressman Hays was a member of the Democratic National Committee. He was a director of surveys for the Arkansas Rural Church Commission and the Pulaski County Hospital Committee. He has been active in numerous civic affairs.

CHARLES S. JOHNSON—Dr. Johnson, president of Fisk University, was born in Bristol, Virginia, in 1893. His degrees include A.B. and Litt.D. from Virginia Union University at Richmond; Ph.B. from Chicago University; L.H.D. from Howard University; and LL.D. from Harvard. At various times he has been director of research and investigation for the Chicago Urban League and for the National Urban League; investigator of Negro migration for the Carnegie Foundation; and associate executive secretary for the Chicago Commission on Race Relations.

From 1923 to 1929, Dr. Johnson was editor of *Opportunity*, a journal of Negro life. From 1928 until 1947, he was director of the social science department of Fisk University where he has been president since 1946.

During World War I, Dr. Johnson served with the A. E. F. in France. He has received numerous awards for distinguished achievement and has served on many committees and commissions in the fields of public service and the advancement of Negro relations. He is a member of the executive committee of the U. S. Commission for UNESCO, the Fulbright Board on Foreign Scholarships, and a trustee of the John Hay Whitney Foundation.

Mr. Denny: Don't we have better living conditions here than in any other country?

Dr. Johnson: Our standard of living is higher, perhaps, than in any other great country in the world. The Negro minority in this country has profited from this general level. It is, however, at the base of our pyramid. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman over here.

Man: Congressman Hays, with continued racial discrimination in the United States, what prospect is there for an effective answer to the challenge of an inclusive communism?

Congressman Hays: Well, of course, these things are relative. As Dr. Johnson indicated, since we cannot live behind the Iron Curtain, since even the great progress we have made is withheld from people who are within the communist sphere, we have to go ahead and do the best we can.

We're making great inroads now against discrimination. It's primarily an educational problem, I think we would agree.

The one thing I wanted to highlight in my principal talk was that we must publicize the progress that we are already making. We are being denied credit in many parts of the world for the progress we are making. One doesn't have to make out a perfect case for America to resent the misrepresentations of the Communists wherever they can reach the people.

So, as I've indicated, what we need to do is to go right ahead making this attack in all proper and constitutional ways against discrimination and prejudice. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman in the aisle here.

Man: My question is directed to Dr. Johnson. What effect do segregated schools have upon our foreign policy and relationships?

Mr. Denny: Segregated schools—what effect will they have in our foreign policy and relationships?

Dr. Johnson: The segregated schools are an indication of an incomplete democracy and are most certain to have an unfavorable effect, in my opinion. I observed just recently that one of the publications from our "Voice of America" program in representing schools used an unsegregated example as a means of representing our educational policy abroad. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you.

Man: Mr. Hays, you cited certain isolated examples of better race relations. Would our foreign policy be as strong based upon these isolated examples of better race relations as it

would be upon a general improvement of race relations in all respects?

Congressman Hays: We want to make the isolated example the rule. We want that to become typical, but just as in the case of Dr. Ralph Bunche, for example, a distinguished statesman, I think there is great inspiration in that. But the impression has been gained in some parts of the world, because of the misrepresentation of the Communists, that Dr. Bunche's great talents have been concealed and that he has been denied the outlets of service. Well, that is not the case. Incidentally, there is today in Denmark, at the request of our American Ambassador to Denmark, a distinguished Negro lecturing to the people of that part of the world.

We want by these examples to increase the faith of other peoples in our sincerity and in our progress in the field of interracial coöperation.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman there on the aisle.

Man: Congressman Hays, is America building a foreign policy on issues which it does not intend to tolerate here in America?

Congressman Hays: I hope not. We could certainly not sustain such a policy. We must build our policy in good faith upon those foundation principles of our Government in the great documents of the past in which we believe, in the Declaration of Independence, in the Constitution of the United States. If we deviate from these principles for strategy reasons abroad, then we will fail.

That bears out, I think, what I said a moment ago: it's one problem, after all. We must prove our good faith by our achievements at home. I think we are proving it. I think we are making tremendous progress.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. We don't seem to have any more questions for Dr. Johnson. We'll take a question from the lady who has one for Congressman Hays. Yes?

Lady: No, this is for Dr. Johnson. What do you feel is the greatest deterrent to the solution of our race relations problems and vice versa, and the greatest opportunity?

Mr. Denny: What's the greatest obstacle to improve race relations and, conversely, what's the greatest opportunity?

Dr. Johnson: I think the greatest obstacle to improving race relations is the general one of segregation. It is at the base of most of the discrimination. The greatest opportunity, I think, is the removal of segregation, educationally and by law. (*Applause*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, very much, Dr. Johnson and Congressman Hays. Thanks also to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, our host, and Station WCAE. Now in just a moment I'll tell you about our subject and speakers for next week.

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Tonight's origination under the auspices of the *Pittsburgh Courier* is similar to broadcasts we have had in the past under the auspices of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Denver Post*. Your Town Meeting is happy to work with the Nation's press for a better informed people. If you are a newspaper publisher, we would like to hear from you and tell you more about the advantages of Town Meeting sponsorship. Scores of businesses are finding it good business to sponsor Town Meeting.

Now to tell you about next week's program, here is Mr. Denny.

Mr. Denny: Next week, from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, under the auspices of the Beth Zion Forum, Town Meeting will take up the question that is very much on the front pages of our newspapers and in our minds these days: "How Can We Best Insure the Loyalty of United States Citizens and Officials?" Our speakers will be: Senator Homer Ferguson, Republican of Michigan; Seth W. Richardson, Washington attorney and chairman of the Loyalty Review Board; and Clifford J. Durr, president of the National Lawyers Guild.

So plan to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the Crier's bell.